

If I admit a violation, what happens next?

The first court hearing is referred to as a initial hearing. If the minor decides to admit one or more charged violations, the judge will discuss the charges and the possible penalties before accepting an admission. The judge (or your lawyer) will fill out a green form which explains the minor's rights and the nature of the charges and possible penalties. The minor will initial and sign the form.

After admitting one or more charge(s), the minor will be referred to the probation department for an interview to obtain a social history report. The probation officer will make a recommendation to the court and the minor will have to return to court for a dispositional hearing.

If I deny a violation, what happens next?

If you feel you did not commit the violation charged, then you should tell the judge or your lawyer you are not responsible. The court will then schedule a trial (contested jurisdictional hearing) where the witnesses will describe what they saw or heard. At the trial, the judge will take evidence, listen to witnesses then make a decision on whether the minor is responsible or not responsible. If the judge determines the minor is not responsible for the crime, the minor will be discharged. If the judge determines the minor is

responsible, the minor will be referred to the probation officer for a dispositional report (just as if the minor had admitted a violation).

Remember:

It is your responsibility to:

1. Appear in court on time.
2. Dress appropriately.
3. Bring all requested documents.
4. Mail a completed financial declaration to: Probation – Finance Department. **Prior to court date**, if you want to have a public defender attorney appointed to represent the minor.

JUVENILE COURT INFORMATION



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Information about Juvenile Delinquency Court

This brochure has been prepared by the Probation Department and the Juvenile Court to inform parents and the minor of what to expect when appearing in Juvenile Court.

What is Juvenile Court?

The Juvenile Court is a special part of the Superior Court devoted to hearing the cases of minors who are charged with a violation of law which occurred when the minor was below age 18 on the date of the violation. The proceedings are confidential in most cases and only the minor and parents/guardians are allowed in court.

What to expect on the first appearance in court

First court appearances are scheduled for 8:30 a.m. You should plan to arrive on time and wait in the hallway for your case to be called. The court officer will call roll before court begins.

The court frequently has a large number of cases to hear during a morning, so you should be prepared to stay the entire morning or until your case is called.

The minor will be called for court by first name and last name. The minor and parents/guardians may enter the court and the bailiff will direct you to a seat.

The court officer will introduce the case and the names of those present. The judge will then discuss the case with the minor. If you have any questions, please direct them to the judge or your child's attorney.

How to dress for court

Appearing in Juvenile Court is a serious matter and **both parents/guardians and minors** who appear should dress appropriately. A good rule is to dress as though you were applying for a job. Just as you would want to impress an employer that you are serious, you should dress to show the court the same courtesy and respect.

Acceptable for Girls:

Long pants, skirt, dress, blouse or sweater.

Unacceptable for Girls:

Short skirts, cutoffs, mini skirts, shorts, tank tops, tube tops, bare midriffs, shirts with advertising or slogans.

Acceptable for Boys:

Long pants and a shirt that are neat, shoes and socks.

Unacceptable for Boys:

Tank tops, shirts with advertising or slogans, cut-offs or shorts.

How to act when you are in court

When addressing the court (the Judge), sit up straight. Be polite and respectful. Say **“yes, your honor”** or **“no, your honor”**, etc in a clear tone of voice. Becoming profane and argumentative is a sign of disrespect and is not tolerated. Also, the proceedings are recorded by a court reporter and it important that the reporter be able to hear and understand what is said.

Should I have a lawyer?

Although the court may permit a minor to proceed without a lawyer, it is not recommended. There are three ways to obtain a lawyer:

* If you have submitted the financial declaration in this packet, and you meet certain financial qualifications, the public defender will be appointed;

* If you do not qualify for the public defender, you may request the court to appoint a lawyer “subject to reimbursement” who will be initially paid by the county, and you will be billed by the county later for the charges incurred by the lawyer, according to your ability to pay;

* You may hire your own lawyer. If you decide to hire your own lawyer, you can obtain a list of qualified lawyers from the court officer.